



WENOCA SIERRAN

Newsletter of the
Western North Carolina Sierra Club

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

FEBRUARY-APRIL 2015

Upcoming Events:

Unitarian Congregation
1 Edwin Place, Asheville
(corner of Charlotte St. & Edwin Pl.)
Social: 7 pm / Program: 7:15 pm
Free and open to the public

Wednesday, Feb 4 Robin Cape

*Using Climate Data to Create
Business Opportunities:
The Collider*

Wednesday, Mar 4 Asheville Beyond Coal

*Emma Greenbaum will
present an update on
efforts to retire the
Duke Energy coal
plant in Arden.*

Wednesday, Apr 1 Cassie Gavin

*A legislative update from
Raleigh on issues relating
to the environment.*

WENOCA will hold meetings on
the first Wednesday of the month.
Executive Committee meetings
will be held at 5:30 pm prior
to the monthly programs.

All members are invited to attend.

For more information, call
Judy Mattox at 828-683-2176
or email judymattox@sbcglobal.net.

WENOCA SIERRAN is the newsletter
of the Western North Carolina Sierra Club.
The newsletter is published four times a year.
Articles and comments are welcome.

Using Climate Data to Create Business Opportunities - Feb. 4

Join Robin Cape on Wed., Feb. 4 for a program on using climate data to create business opportunities: "The Collider", backed by the Asheville-Buncombe Sustainable Communities Initiative.

Robin Cape, former Asheville City Council member, says this is an exciting new role for Asheville to play in climate adaptation. She invites us to learn about a business and learning center in development in downtown Asheville that brings climate data into decision making. Cape envisions the Center attracting business entrepreneurs, artists, climatologists and data wizards to work together and deal with the challenges of climate change.

Just two blocks away from the Center's downtown location is a vast storehouse of records at the National Climatic Data Center, available to businesses, other branches of government, and people interested in making informed decisions that account for increased climate variability and extremes. Cape sees a big opportunity to turn this data into actionable information to help companies respond to the impacts of climate change like increasing risks of drought, heavy rains, extended heat waves and rising sea levels that could threaten communities and companies.

After over 25 years as an entrepreneur, Robin Cape retired from Preservation Hall Architectural Salvage Company in 2001. The endeavor was a successful strategy for green business that was instrumental in the reclamation and reuse of building products for over 10 years in WNC.

In 2005 Robin was elected to the Asheville City Council, where she was a leader in institutionalizing sustainability into the City's operations and focus. She designed and championed the establishment of the Sustainable Advisory Committee for Energy and Environment (SACEE), a citizen led committee focused on identifying, researching and advising Asheville City Council on appropriate opportunities and technology for city led sustainability initiatives. During her tenure, the City of Asheville instituted Energy Efficiency goals, developed an office of sustainability, and began its reputation as one of the most sustainable small cities in the Southeast.

After leaving office in 2010, she helped launch the Reading, Riding, Retrofit program, which has evolved into the NC Green Schools Program. She's worked with the Asheville Hub Project, a think tank advancing economic growth. Now she is spearheading the Asheville-Buncombe Sustainable Communities Initiative, which is backing the Collider as a good bet for economic growth leveraging one of the city's most attractive assets, the National Climatic Data Center.



Robin Cape

Asheville 'Beyond Coal' Update - March 4



Emma Greenbaum

The Asheville coal plant is still the largest single source of carbon emissions in Western North Carolina, and we have to put an end to it. Climate change is the biggest ecological challenge Sierra Club has ever taken on, and may well be the biggest challenge our species has ever faced. For two years, the Asheville 'Beyond Coal' campaign has been calling on Duke Energy to retire the expensive, dirty coal plant in our community and make a transition to clean energy. We've said it to Duke Energy executives, we've said it to the

Asheville City Council and heard it echoed back, we've chanted it in downtown Asheville at our 'Rally for our Future' in 2013, and we've even said it on national television as part of the Showtime series, *Years of Living Dangerously*. Thousands of people have joined us in the call for local climate action, and it's time for Duke Energy to listen.

Our campaign has highlighted dangerous water pollution from local coal ash ponds that are leaking into the French Broad River, as well as the dangers of carbon pollution. We have called for the retirement of the plant to help create clean energy jobs, protect our water quality, and reduce our contribution to climate change

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'Beyond Coal' Update - Emma Greenbaum - March 4

(Continued from page 1)

For a long time, we had thought that toxic air pollutants coming from the plant were relatively minimal due to air pollution controls installed in 2006.

It's clear now from new information we have gathered that the Asheville coal plant does indeed pose a threat to public health due to air pollution. Specifically, the plant is emitting sulfur dioxide, a toxic pollutant and lung irritant.

Sulfur dioxide (SO₂) is a byproduct of coal combustion, and levels vary based on the type of coal used. The consequences for human health range from triggering asthma attacks to contributing to chronic respiratory diseases. The controls on the smokestacks at the Asheville plant made dramatic reductions in air pollutants when first installed, but in recent years have not been doing enough to remove this pollutant.

We are beginning to alert the community to the dangers of air pollution coming from the Asheville coal plant, and we need your

help. This plant is not only polluting our water and contributing to climate disruption - it is actively harming the health of our communities.

The Asheville coal plant is the largest single source of carbon emissions in Western North Carolina. It is also the single largest source of toxic, health threatening pollutants from the industrial sector. It's overwhelmingly clear that it's time for a change. We hope you'll join us at the March presentation to learn more, and become a part of the solution.

Emma Greenbaum is the Organizing Representative for North Carolina Beyond Coal. She got her start organizing as a student at American University as a member of the Community Action Social Justice Collective where she worked on trade justice and campus workers issues and graduated with a BA in Economics and International Development with a focus on Latin America. She later worked in Bridgeport, Chicago on the successful Fisk and Crawford coal plant fight.

Environmental Legislative Update: The Good, the Bad, the Ugly - April 1

Join us on April 1 for our Legislative Update with Cassie Gavin. The meeting will include a legislative preview of upcoming issues and legislation related to the environment that may be introduced by the NC General Assembly in the 2015 session.

Cassie will update members on the status of current environmental issues affecting North Carolina such as solar energy, fracking, coal ash, water quality, and offshore drilling and discuss the possibility of any legislative action on these issues in the coming year.

Cassie is the NC Chapter Sierra Club Director of Government Affairs. She is the Chapter's primary lobbyist at the state legislature. Cassie attended undergrad and law school at UNC-Chapel Hill. She is responsible for tracking legislation affecting the environment and lobbying legislators on the Sierra Club's priority issues. Before starting with the Sierra Club in 2013, Cassie worked in conservation with NC Coastal Land Trust for seven years. Cassie's interests include kayaking, hiking and travel.



Cassie Gavin

Sierra Club 2014 Awards

The Western NC Group of the Sierra Club recently recognized Deltec Homes as its Environmental Business of the year. Local Sierra Club leader Ken Brame said that the homes are built to be very energy efficient, including a line that is net zero on energy use. The company's offices and production facility operate on 100 percent renewable energy sources with 270 solar panels on the roof and they purchase wind energy from Renewable Choice. They have reduced their construction waste to where 81% is diverted from landfills through recycling and reuse. Their goal is 100 percent by 2016. Brame said that Deltec exemplifies the true meaning of being a "green business" and the Sierra Club is pleased to recognize them for all that they are doing to protect our environment.

State Representative Joe Sam Queen from Waynesville was recognized as the Green Legislator of the year for Western NC for his many years of efforts to protect the environment in NC. He was a leader in the fight to prevent Fracking in NC, opposed efforts to weaken our environmental laws, and has supported efforts to protect our air and water.

Also recognized were local volunteers: Lisa McWerter for her service as a hike leader and executive committee member, Judy Mattox, for her leadership as chair of the WNC Group, Rich Wasch for his service as group treasurer and many hours volunteering to elect good environmental candidates and Karen Ziff for her work as greeter for our monthly meetings and also many hours of volunteering to elect our endorsed candidates.



Help us save trees ... let us e-mail your newsletter!

WENOCA member emails are requested.

Send your email address to: judymattox@sbcglobal.net.



Pisgah-Nantahala Forests Revision Plan

US Forest Service Pisgah-Nantahala Forests Revision Plan opens 700,000 acres to logging

The US Forest Service is working on the Pisgah-Nantahala Forests Revision Plan, which has two distinct parts:

- (1) Wilderness recommendations, and (2) management for multiple uses such as logging, wildlife, water, recreation, etc. The plan will extend for the next 15 years over the forests' 1.1 million acres of land.

The Forest Service current revision proposal includes opening 70% of the forests (700,000 acres) to logging "suitable for timber

production and road building." It opens the Mountain Treasures and hiking trails such as Art Loeb, John Rock, Black Mountain, etc. to logging.

Please email your objections to NCPlanRevision@fs.fed.us or postal mail to US Forest Service, 160 Zillicoa St, Suite A, Asheville, NC 28801. Go to our website Wenoca.org (conservation issues - ***Our Forests in Danger***) for talking points and for specifics on Wilderness recommendations & trails to be protected. For more information or to volunteer, contact judyमतox@sbcglobal.net, 828-683-2176.

Local Municipalities Raise their Voices Against Fracking

Both the Asheville City Council and the Weaverville Town Council adopted resolutions which oppose hydraulic fracturing. The resolutions noted the following concerns about fracking: the increased demand on regional water supplies, the high pressure injection of toxic chemicals and the documented negative environmental and health impacts.

The resolutions state that Western North Carolina has diverse and abundant natural resources that would be threatened by fracking. In addition, the resolutions point to Section 5 of the

North Carolina State Constitution that it shall be the policy of the State to conserve and protect its lands and waters.

The resolutions specifically call upon the state not to permit fracking in North Carolina, specifically in Western North Carolina and Buncombe County and call for the General Assembly to reinstate the ban and give local government the authority to ensure compliance of Section 5 of the State Constitution.

Please thank the members of the Asheville City and Weaverville Town Councils for taking a stand against fracking.



Late Winter - Early Spring Hiking Schedule



SAT, FEB 21 - COVE CREEK/CANEY BOTTOM - A pleasant, easy to moderate, 4.6 mile loop hike near Looking Glass Rock in Pisgah National Forest. The trail follows a stream part of the way and a short side trail leads to Cove Creek falls. We will learn about the importance of streams for providing drainage. Wear sturdy shoes or hiking boots, bring water and a lunch or snack. Meet in Asheville at 10 AM and return about 4 PM. RSVP to hike leader Jane at janelaping@sbcglobal.net or 828-772-0379.

SAT, FEB 28 - CAESAR'S HEAD, RAVEN CLIFF FALLS AREA in S. Carolina - Moderate/Easy hike, approx 6.5 miles round trip. More hike details to come. We will learn more about some of the birds that winter here, including recordings of their songs. Be prepared for \$2.00/person park admission fee. NOTE if there is snow we will come up with an alternate hike that's closer to Asheville, as long as the roads are open. Meet in Asheville at 10 AM, return around 6 PM. RSVP to hike leader Lisa McWherter at lismcw2@gmail.com or 828-713-4994.

SAT, MAR 14 - DANIEL RIDGE - A moderate 4-mile loop hike in Pisgah Forest near the Fish Hatchery follows the creek and finishes with an amazing waterfall at the end. We will learn about the history of logging in the area. Wear sturdy shoes or hiking boots, bring water and a lunch or snack. Meet in Asheville at 10 AM and return about 3-4 PM. RSVP to hike leader Jane at janelaping@sbcglobal.net or 828-772-0379.

SAT, MAR 21 - GREEN RIVER GAMELANDS/PULLIAM CREEK TRAIL - Meet in Asheville at 10 AM and return around 5:45 PM. Moderate with some easy level of difficulty. Approx 6 miles R.T. on this there & back trail with elevation gain of 900 ft. It's a beautiful trail that ends up at the Green River just below the narrows, with rapids moving through large boulders. On the way there, there's a tedious creek crossing with wiggly step-stones, so wear good footwear & consider a hiking pole. Plan to learn about the beautiful early-blooming wildflowers there as well. NOTE: Sorry, no doggies this trip due to Pullium Creek crossing. Please RSVP to hike leader Lisa McWherter at lismcw2@gmail.com or 828-713-4994.

SAT, APR 11 - GREYBEARD FALLS - A breathtaking, moderate to difficult 5 mile in and out hike along a rocky stream with 10 dry-foot water crossings in Montreat. We will examine the abundant and diverse wildflowers on this trail and enjoy lunch by the waterfall. Wear sturdy shoes or hiking boots, bring water and a lunch or snack. Meet in Asheville at 10 AM and return about 3 PM. RSVP to hike leader Jane at janelaping@sbcglobal.net or 828-772-0379.

SAT, APR 18 - DUPONT STATE FOREST: CEDAR ROCK & BURNT MTN TRAILS - Meet in Asheville at 10 AM, return around 5:30 PM. This hike is Moderate/Easy. Distance approx 5.5 miles round trip. This hike starts on Corn Mill Shoals trail, then to Burnt Mtn trail, which offers some interesting rocky areas. Back via Little River trail, and then to the top of Cedar Rock. There we'll have some great rock outcrops & nice views of the surrounding mountains. Learn about the history of this area & how it came to be designated as park land; also about an adjacent area that is a super fund site. Experienced hikers or well-conditioned folks only, due to the distance. Please RSVP to hike leader Lisa McWherter at lismcw2@gmail.com or 828-713-4994.

The Executive Committee meets monthly. For more information, please contact Judy Mattox at 828-683-2176 or at judymattox@sbcglobal.net. All WENOCA members are invited to attend.

Our website is www.wenoca.org.

WENOCA OFFICERS - 2015 LEADERS

Judy Mattox – Chair - 828-683-2176

Lisa McWherter - Outings Leader

Rich Wasch - Treasurer

Mark Threlkeld - River Cleanup - At Large

Ken Brame - Political Committee

Gail Solomon - Media - At Large

Anne Marie Doherty - At Large

Gene Keil - Website/Membership Committee

Rober Zieber - At Large

Elaine Lite - Newsletter Editor

Emma Greenbaum - Beyond Coal - 828-251-1272



**SIERRA
CLUB**
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WENOCA GROUP
SIERRA CLUB
PO Box 469
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ORGANIZATION
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ASHEVILLE, NC 28801

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Please consider volunteering for the following positions:

- (1) Help with data entry, posting for social media, and re-design of our website.
- (2) Help to work towards creating a Pisgah-Nantahala Forest Revision Plan that will protect our forests.
- (3) Help with clean up of our section of the French Broad River in the spring.
- (4) Help work on our 2015 NC Sierra Club Conservation Priorities:
 - The Clean Power Plan: pressure Governor McCrory to release a strong State Implementation Plan for NC to comply with the new EPA carbon rules with efficiency and clean energy as the focus.
 - Solar: protect and expand favorable clean energy policies - REPS, solar tax credits, net metering; third party sales, and expand rooftop solar across the state through grassroots work.
 - Offshore Wind vs Oil: Make offshore wind the preferred alternative to offshore drilling.
- (5) Help work on "Youth Engagement" to encourage more young people to become involved with protecting our environment.

If you are interested in learning more and might be interested in being part of a team to work on these issues, please contact Judy Mattox at judymattox@sbcglobal.net or 828-683-2176.